LETTERS

TO

DR. HORSLEY.

PART III.

CONTAINING

AN ANSWER TO HIS REMARKS ON LETTERS, PART II.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

Strictures on Mr. Howe's Ninth Number of Obſervations on Books ancient and modern

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S.

INFELIX! QUÆ TANTA ANIMUM DEMENTIA CEPIT?
NON VIRES ALIAS, CONVERSAQUE NUMINA SENTIS?

VIRGIL.

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PREFACE.

WHEN, in the advertiſment of my *Hiſtory of early Opinions concerning Chriſt*, I pledged myſelf to ſhew, that *Dr. Horſley's Remarks* on my Letters to him were "as defective in argument, as they "are in temper," I did not mean that I would animadvert upon them *immediately*, or very ſoon; but intended to wait till I ſhould hear what would be objected to that larger work, and then reply to him and others at the ſame time. I found, however, that the advertiſement had raiſed a general expectation of a *ſpeedy* reply to Dr. Horſley in particular; and being unwilling to diſappoint any expectations I had even unintentionally excited, and more unwilling to appear deſirous of ſhrinking from this diſcuſſion, I have done at preſent what

what many of my friends will probably think might as well have been deferred a while longer.

Besides, as Dr. Horsley's Remarks were written before he had seen my large History, I thought it might not be amiss, in this manner, to close *the first act in our drama*; the *second* being reserved for what may be occasioned by that work, which will probably be much more considerable than any thing that has been produced by the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. And my design (after the termination of the present discussion with Dr. Horsley, which must soon come to an issue) is to wait a year or two, till I see what the publication of my large work on this subject shall produce, and then to reply to all my opponents at once; frankly acknowledging any mistakes I shall appear to have fallen into, and vindicating whatever I shall think capable of it, and deserving it.

Agreeably

Agreeably to this ſcheme, I have annexed to theſe *Letters* ſome *Remarks on the ninth number of Mr. Howes's Obſervations on books ancient and modern*, in which he has begun his attack upon me. But in this I have been very conciſe, expecting to have an opportunity of treating the ſubjects more largely when I conſider what he has farther to produce. Mr. White alſo cannot decline the diſcuſſion, and I have heard of the threats of others. We may, conſequently, hope that this controverſy (to which I find that much attention is given in foreign countries) will ſoon come to a proper termination, ſo that learned men in all nations will not long remain in uncertainty with reſpect to any thing of importance relating to it.

As this is a controverſy that will probably have laſting conſequences, let all who engage in it, on either ſide, be careful to acquit themſelves in proportion to the character which they apprehend they have at ſtake; but above all, let *truth* be our great object.

object. Our readers will easily perceive whether it be so or not. We shall sooner deceive ourselves than them. And least of all can we impose upon that great being who is *the God of truth*, who secretly guides all our pursuits, and whose excellent purposes will be answered by them, with whatever views we may engage in them.

N. B. Though an account of *the State of Calvinism among the Dissenters*, on which Dr. Horsley enlarges so much, has but little to do with the object of our controversy, I should have said something more on this subject, but that I hear it will be considered by a person who is exceedingly well qualified to inform the public concerning it, and to explain the cause of Dr. Horsley's very gross and palpable mistake.

ERRATA.

N. B. *(b)* signifies from the bottom of the page.

Page 26, line 2, *(b) for* 14, *read* 1.
——— line 1, *(b) for* 6, *read* 16.
——— 28, line 11, *note, for* regii, *read* regio.

LETTERS

TO THE

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS.

AN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

REV. SIR,

IN the courſe of our controverſy, you maintained that there was *a church of trinitarian Jewiſh chriſtians at Jeruſalem after the time of Adrian*; and as the account that Origen gives of the ſtate of things in his time does not admit of the exiſtence of ſuch a church, you ſcrupled not to ſay, that "he "had recourſe to the wilful and deliberate allega-"tion of a notorious falſehood." This you did on ſo little foundation, that I charged you with being *a falſifier of hiſtory, and a defamer of the character of the dead.*

On this article you have thought proper (notwithſtanding your previouſly-declared reſolution to the contrary) to make your defence, in which you

produce five paſſages from ancient writers, two from Origen himſelf, two from Jerom, and one from Epiphanius. In theſe *Letters* I undertake to ſhow that, though you have taken eighteen months to write, and to reviſe your *Remarks* you have gróſsly miſunderſtood, or miſapplied, all the paſſages, ſo that not one of them is to your purpoſe, and my charge ſtill remains in its full force. For the juſtneſs of *my* interpretation of the paſſages in queſtion, I appeal to all who have any pretenſions to ſchoarſhip, in this or any other country, and in this public manner I call upon you to vindicate *your own*.

On this article, at leaſt, an article deliberately ſelected by yourſelf, let the controverſy between us come to a fair iſſue. Nothing has been, or ſhall be wanting to it on my part; and therefore the Public will certainly expect your explicit and ſpeedy anſwer.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Birmingham, June 1, 1786.

LETTER

LETTER I.

Of the Veracity of Origen.

REV. SIR,

AFTER having indulged your indolence, as you ſay, p. 1, eighteen months, I am happy to find, that, notwithſtanding your opinion, ib. of my *manifeſt inſufficiency* as your antagoniſt (which you obſerve, p. 2, "left you at liberty to indulge your-"ſelf without ſeeming to deſert your cauſe") there was ſomething in my *Letters* to you that has at length rouſed you to make a reply. To me this is a very high gratification. For my predominant diſpoſition not being indolence, I rejoice in any circumſtance that contributes to keep the ſubject of our controverſy in view; being confident that nothing but a continued attention to it is requiſite to a ſpeedy deciſion in favour of the cauſe that I have eſpouſed, which I cannot help conſidering as of the greateſt importance to the cauſe of chriſtianity itſelf.

I ſhould have been more pleaſed if you had purſued the diſcuſſion of every article in debate between us; but as you have thought proper to confine yourſelf chiefly to what relates to the orthodoxy of the primitive Jewiſh church, I muſt do the ſame, firſt conſidering what you have advanced in order to impeach the veracity of Origen, and then the teſtimonies of Epiphanius and Jerom, as evi-

dences of the existence of a whole church of orthodox Jews at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian.

"In the second book against Celsus" (to use your own words, p. 22.) "near the beginning of the book, "Origen asserts, of the Hebrew christians of his "own times, without exception, that they had not "abandoned the laws and customs of their ancestors, and that for that reason they were called "*Ebionites*." This is also the appellation that he gives to all the Jewish christians, of whom he makes two classes, one of them believing the miraculous conception of Jesus, and the other denying it; but neither of them admitting his divinity.

This testimony of such a person as Origen to the unitarianism of all the Jewish christians *in his time*, goes so near to prove the unitarianism of the great body of Jewish christians, and consequently of the christian church in general, *in the time of the apostles*, that I do not wonder at your wishing to set it aside; and it is so full and express, that you have no other way of doing it, than by maintaining that this most respectable man knowingly asserted an untruth. You even add, p. 28. 30. that you would not take his evidence upon oath. Indeed, this writer was so circumstanced, in consequence of living so near Judea, and sometimes in it, that he could not but have known whether there was any considerable body of Jewish christians who believed the doctrine of the trinity, and who had abandoned

 the

the cuſtoms of their anceſtors, or not; ſo that if what he aſſerted be an untruth, it *muſt* have been a *wilful* one, and (as ſerving the purpoſe of his argument) a *deliberate* one.

There are, however, ſome circumſtances attending this charge of a wilful falſehood againſt Origen, that I ſhould have thought might have made you pauſe before you had advanced it ſo confidently as you have done.

The general character of Origen makes the ſuppoſition highly improbable. For he was a man not more diſtinguiſhed by his genius and learning (in which he had confeſſedly no ſuperior in the age in which he lived) than he was by his integrity, and his firmneſs in the cauſe of chriſtian truth; and when, in a ſubſequent age, his opinions were deemed to be heretical, his greateſt enemies left his moral character unimpeached. In ſuch eſteem was he univerſally held, that, as Euſebius informs us, it was generally ſaid of him, "As was his ſpeech, ſuch "was his conduct; and as was his conduct, ſuch "was his ſpeech *:" his eloquence and the virtues of his life correſponding to each other. And yet this is the man whoſe evidence, becauſe it makes againſt yourſelf, you declare that you would not admit upon oath.

* Οιον γαρ τον λογον τοιονδε φασι τον τροπον· ϗ οιον τον τροπον τοιονδε ϗ τον λογον επιδεικνυτο. Euſeb. Hiſt. L. vi, cap. 3. p. 261.

Had the teſtimony of Origen to the unitarianiſm of the great body of Jewiſh chriſtians not been well founded, it was greatly the purpoſe of many of the early writers (and particularly of Euſebius, who maintained the novelty of the unitarian doctrine) to have refuted it. But neither Euſebius, nor any other ancient writer, the moſt zealous for orthodoxy, and the moſt hoſtile to Origen on other accounts, has attempted it. Might it not have been expected of Euſebius in particular, that after he had copied Origen's account of the Ebionites, by dividing them into two claſſes, juſt as he had done (viz. ſome of them believing the miraculous conception, and others not) he would have added that, notwithſtanding what Origen had ſaid to the contrary, many of them had abandoned the law of Moſes, and were believers in the divinity of Chriſt? But he has not done any ſuch thing. He therefore muſt have known that he could not do it, and he was not diſpoſed to tell a wilful lie in the caſe. Indeed, I am willing to think, that few perſons are ſo abandoned as to be capable of doing this.

With reſpect to this particular aſſertion concerning the ſtate of the Jewiſh chriſtians in the time of Origen, it is ſo circumſtanced, that if he had even been *capable* of aſſerting a falſehood, *this* was the laſt that he would have had recourſe to; becauſe he was writing in a public controverſy, in which he has inſiſted largely on this particular article, and inſulted his adverſary for his ignorance of a notorious fact. In this ſituation, he muſt have been nothing

leſs

leſs than infatuated, to have advanced what all his readers muſt have known to be falſe. A falſehood ſo circumſtanced, and which muſt have been a wilful one, would have been ſo evidently ruinous to his credit, and ſo fatal to his cauſe, that he muſt have been a fool not to have ſeen it.

Beſides, this particular circumſtance, of the chriſtian Jews not abandoning the cuſtoms of their anceſtors, was not of ſo much conſequence to his general argument in defence of chriſtianity, but that he might very well have neglected it. Nothing, therefore, but a perfect confidence that what he did advance was true, could have led him to make any declaration on the ſubject.

What is more extraordinary ſtill, you ſay, p. 25, "he himſelf contradicted his own aſſertion, at no "greater diſtance than the third ſection of the "ſame book; where the good Father," as you ironically call him, "takes quite another ground to con-"fute his adverſary." Certainly this muſt be thought to be *a priori*, in the higheſt degree improbable.

I ſhall now conſider this flagrant contradiction, by which this great man (for ſo all the world has ever called him) is ſuppoſed to confute himſelf, and ſo far to have loſt all character, that the Archdeacon of St. Alban's would not take his evidence upon oath; and I ſhall recite it in your own words.

'At no greater diſtance than in the third ſection 'of the ſame book, the good Father takes quite an-

'other ground to confute his adverſary; he inſults 'over his ignorance for not making the diſtinctions 'which he himſelf, in the allegation in queſtion, 'had confounded.' "It is my preſent point, ſays "Origen, to evince Celſus's ignorance, who has "made a Jew ſay to his countrymen, to Iſraelites "believing in Chriſt, Upon what motive have you "deſerted the law of your anceſtors: But how have "they deſerted the law of their anceſtors, who re-"prove thoſe who are inattentive to it, and ſay Tell "me ye, &c?" 'Then after a citation of certain 'texts from St. Paul's epiſtles, in which the apoſtle 'avails himſelf of the authority of the law to enforce 'particular duties, which texts make nothing either 'for or againſt the Jew's aſſertion, that the chriſtians 'of the circumciſion had abandoned their ancient 'laws, but prove only that the diſuſe of the law, if 'it was actually gone into diſuſe, could not be 'deemed a deſertion, becauſe it proceeded not 'from any diſregard to the authority of the law-'giver. After a citation of texts to this purpoſe, 'Origen proceeds in this remarkable ſtrain.' "And "how confuſedly does Celſus's Jew ſpeak upon this "ſubject, when he might have ſaid *more plauſibly*, "Some of you have relinquiſhed the old cuſtoms "upon pretence of expoſitions and allegories. "Some again expounding, as you call it, ſpiritually, "nevertheleſs, obſerve the inſtitutions of our anceſ-"tors. But ſome, not admitting theſe expo-"ſitions, are willing to receive Jeſus as the perſon "foretold by the prophets, and to obſerve the law "of Moſes, according to the ancient cuſtoms, as

"having

"having in the letter the whole meaning of the "spirit*." 'In these words Origen confesses all 'that I have alleged of him. He confesses, in 'contradiction to his former assertion, that he 'knew of three sorts of Jews professing christianity; 'one sort adhered to the letter of the Mosaic law, 'rejecting all figurative interpretations: another 'sort admitted a figurative interpretation, conform-'ing, however, to the letter of the precept, but a 'third sort (the first in Origen's enumeration) had 'relinquished the observance of the literal precept, 'conceiving it to be of no importance in comparison 'of the latent figurative meaning.'

This contains the whole of your curious reasoning, in which you suppose that Origen, in treating of the same subject, and in continuation of the same argument, has given you this pretence for impeaching his veracity as you have done. But surely this writer, who must have known his own meaning, could not have imagined that he had really contradicted himself in two passages, not in different works, written at different times, or in distant parts of the same work (in which he might have forgotten

* Και ως συγκεχυμενως γε ταυθ' ο παρα τω Κελσω Ιουδαιος λεγει, δυναμενος πιθανωτερον ειπειν, οτι τινες μεν ημων καταλελοιπασι τα εθη προφασει διηγησεων και αλληγοριων· τινες δε και διηγουμενοι, ως επαγγελλεσθε, πνευματικως, ουδεν ητιον τα παλαια τηρειτε· τινες δε, ουδε διηγουμενοι, βουλεσθε τον Ιησουν παραδεξασθαι ως προφητευθεντα, και τον Μωυσεως νομον τηρησαι, κατα τα παλαια· ως εν τη λεξει εχοντες τον παντα τυ πνευματος νουν. Lib. ii. p. 59.

what

what he had ſaid in one of the paſſages, when he was writing the other) but in the ſame work, the ſame part of the work, and in paragraphs ſo very near to each other. And I believe nobody before yourſelf, ever imagined that there was any contradiction in them at all.

In the former he aſſerts, in general terms, without making any particular exception, that the Jewiſh chriſtians adhered to the cuſtoms of their anceſtors, and in the latter, which almoſt immediately follows it, he ſays that his adverſary, who had aſſerted the contrary, would have ſaid what was more *plauſible* (not what was *true*) if he had ſaid that ſome of them had relinquiſhed their ancient cuſtoms, while the reſt adhered to them; alluding, perhaps, to a few who had abandoned thoſe cuſtoms, while the great body of them had not, which is ſufficiently conſiſtent with what he had ſaid before. For inconſiderable exceptions are not regarded in general aſſertions. It would have been very extraordinary indeed, if *no* Jewiſh chriſtians whatever had abandoned the rites of their former religion, when, in all ages, ſome Jews, whether they became chriſtians or not, have done ſo. In like manner, it concerns me not to aſſert that no individuals of the Jewiſh chriſtians embraced the doctrine of the trinity, becauſe my purpoſe is ſufficiently anſwered if *the great body of them*, to whom the reſt bore no ſenſible proportion, were unitarians. And though there might be a few Jewiſh chriſtians who had deſerted their former cuſtoms, which would have given Celſus a *plauſible*

pretence

pretence for making ſuch a diviſion of them as to make theſe one of the claſſes, yet the great body of them had not; and this was ſufficient to remove the reproach which Celſus had thrown out againſt the Jewiſh chriſtians in general.

That this was really the caſe, and that the great body of Jewiſh chriſtians were likewiſe unitarians, we have the expreſs teſtimony of Origen, uncontradicted, as I have ſhewn, by himſelf, or any other authority whatever. He could not but be well informed with reſpect to the fact, his veracity was never impeached; and if he had been diſpoſed to deny the truth (which he had no temptation to do) he wrote in circumſtances in which his attempts to falſify could not have availed him.

But to prove Origen to be guilty of contradicting himſelf is not the only uſe you make of the paſſage. You ſay, p. 27, "But this is not all. In the next "ſentence he gives us to underſtand, though I "confeſs more indirectly, but he gives us to un-"derſtand, that of theſe three ſorts of Hebrews "profeſſing chriſtianity, they only who had laid "aſide the uſe of the Moſaic law, were in his "time conſidered as true chriſtians." This is extraordinary indeed; but let us ſee *how* it is *given to be underſtood*. Having found ſo little in your clear *concluſions*, I do not expect much from your ſuppoſed *inſinuations*.

'For

'For he mentions it as a further proof of the 'ignorance of Celſus, pretending, as it appears he 'did, to deep erudition upon all ſubjects, that, in 'his account of the hereſies of the chriſtian church, 'he had omitted the Iſraelites believing in Jeſus, 'and not laying aſide the law of their anceſtors. "But how ſhould Celſus," he ſays, "make clear "diſtinctions upon this point, who, in the ſequel "of his work, mentions impious hereſies, alto-"gether alienated from Chriſt, and others which "have renounced the creator, and has not noticed "[or knew not of] Iſraelites believing in Jeſus, "and not relinquiſhing the law of their fathers*." 'What opinion,' you ſay, 'is to be entertained of a 'writer's veracity, who in one page aſſerts that the 'Hebrews profeſſing chriſtianity had not renounced 'the Jewiſh law, and in the next affirms that a part 'of them had renounced it, not without an inſinua-'tion that they who had not were heretics, not true 'chriſtians. EGO HUIC TESTI, ETIAM JURATO, 'QUI TAM MANIFESTO FUMOS VENDIT, ME NON 'CREDITURUM ESSE CONFIRMO.'

* Αλλα γαρ ποθεν Κελσω τα καΐα τον τοπον τρανωσαι, ος ϗ αιρεσεων μεν αθεων, ϗ τȣ Ιησȣ παντη αλληλριων εν τοις εξης εμνημονευσε, ϗ αλλων καΐαλειπȣσων τον δημιȣργον· ȣκ οιδε δε ϗ Ισραηλιτας εις Ιησȣν πιστευοντας, ϗ ȣ καΐαλειποντας τον παΐριον νομον; ȣ γαρ προσκεΐται αυτω φιλαληθως ολα τα καΐα τον τοπον εξεταται, ιν ει τι χρησιμον ευρισκοι παραδεξηται, αλλα ϗ ως εχθρος, ϗ ολος τȣ ανατρεπειν αμα τω ακȣσαι γενομενȣ, τα τοιαΐα ανεγραψεν. Lib. ii. p. 59.

Such

Such is the curious inference of the learned Archdeacon of St. Albans. From this conſtruction of the paſſage, a perſon might be led to think that Origen repreſented Celſus as having undertaken to give an account of the hereſies in the chriſtian church, and as having, in that account, omitted *the Iſraelites believing in Jeſus, and not laying aſide the rites of their anceſtors*; and on no other ground can your inſinuation ſtand. Whereas the moſt natural conſtruction of the paſſage is, that Origen ſays, "It "is no wonder that Celſus ſhould be ſo ignorant of "what he was treating, when he claſſed the Gnoſtics "along with chriſtians, and did not even know "that there were Iſraelites who profeſſed chriſ-"tianity, and adhered to the laws of Moſes." Where then is the moſt diſtant inſinuation that the *Iſraelites believing in Chriſt, and not laying aſide the rites of their anceſtors*, were heretics? That the Gnoſtics were claſſed with chriſtians, was a common complaint of the orthodox in that age.

You ſtrangely allege another inſtance of what you call *prevarication* in Origen, in the ſame book againſt Celſus. In the controverſy with the Jews, about the meaning of the word עלמה, which he contends ſignifies *a virgin*, he ſays (Remarks, p. 29) "The word עלמה, which the LXX have "tranſlated into the word παρθενος [a virgin] but "other interpreters into the word νεανις [a young "woman]

"woman] is put too, AS THEY SAY, in Deutero-
"nomy, for a virgin*."

On this you remark as follows, "What is this "*as they ſay?* Was it unknown to the compiler of "the Hexapla, what the reading of the Hebrew "text, in his own time, was? If he knew that it "was what he would have it thought to be, why "does he ſeem to aſſert upon hearſay only? If he "knew not, why did he not inform himſelf, that he "might either aſſert with confidence what he had "found upon enquiry to be true, or not aſſert "what could not be maintained? EGO HUIC TESTI, "ETIAMSI JURATO, QUI TAM MANIFESTO FUMOS "VENDIT, ME NON CREDITURUM ESSE CON-"FIRMO."

I am aſtoniſhed that any man could think this ſtate of the caſe probable. The queſtion between Origen and the Jews was not what was the word in the Hebrew, but what was the meaning of it in a particular place. But even, admitting that the diſpute was about the true reading in the original, what great matter was there in Origen's ſaying *the Jews ſaid ſo*, when he knew that what they ſaid was

* Εαν δε Ιουδαιος ευρεσιλογων, το ιδε η παρθενος μη γεγραφθαι λεγει αλλ' αυ' αυτε ιδε η νεανις· φησομεν προς αυτον, οτι μεν η μεν λεξις η αλμα ην οι μεν εβδομηκοντα μετειληφασι προς την παρθενον, αλλοι δε εις την νεανιν, κειται ως φασι καὶ εν τω δευτερονομιω επι παρθενε υδως εχουσα. Lib. i. p. 27.

true?

true? Is this a foundation on which to affirm that you would not take a man's evidence upon his oath. What an appetite muſt a man have for calumny, who can ſeize upon ſuch a circumſtance as this to gratify it?

Fœnum habet in cornu, hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

General Obſervations relating to the ſuppoſed orthodox church of Jewiſh chriſtians at Jeruſalem, after the time of Adrian.

REV. SIR,

HAVING fully conſidered what you have alleged in ſupport of your extraordinary charge of *wilful falſehood* in Origen, becauſe the ſuppoſition of his being an honeſt man was inconſiſtent with the exiſtence of your church of orthodox Jewiſh chriſtians at Jeruſalem after the time of Adrian, I ſhall proceed to conſider the *poſitive evidence* that you have produced for the actual exiſtence of

of ſuch a church. But I ſhall, in the firſt place, mention ſome obſervations of a general nature relating to the ſubject.

That there was a chriſtian church at Jeruſalem after the time of Adrian, we all acknowledge; but you ſay, p. 41, "the point in diſpute between us is, "of what members the church of Ælia was com-"poſed. He ſays of converts of Gentile ex-"traction, I ſay, of Hebrews, of the very ſame "perſons, in the greater part, who were members "of the ancient Hebrew church at the time when "the Jews were ſubdued by Adrian."

1. Now that the members of this church were not Jews, but Greeks, I think indiſputable from this plain conſideration, that after the time of Adrian the biſhops of that church were Greeks, and that the language in which the public offices were performed was Greek; whereas immediately before the biſhops had been Hebrews, and the public offices had been in the Hebrew tongue.

2. If there was any conſiderable body of orthodox Jewiſh chriſtians, it is extraordinary that no particular mention ſhould be made of them by any ancient writer. Jerom ſpeaks of his acquaintance with learned Ebionites by whom he was taught the Hebrew tongue. Living as he did in the country, he might as eaſily, on your idea, have found learned orthodox Jewiſh chriſtians, with whom it would have been more agreeable to him to aſſociate, unleſs you

you ſuppoſe that the learned Ebionites were heretics, and the unlearned orthodox.

3. As ſo many writers ſpeak of Ebionites, or heterodox Nazarenes, it would ſurely have been natural for ſome of them to have added, that they were not the great body, or at leaſt not the whole, of the Jewiſh chriſtians. The mention of the one would naturally have drawn after it, on ſome occaſion, the mention of the other. And yet no ancient writer ſpeaks of them.

4. As to *a whole church* of orthodox Jewiſh chriſtians at Jeruſalem, or elſewhere, we hear of no intercourſe between any ſuch church and other orthodox churches. None of their biſhops, or deputies from them, appear at any council; no appeals are ever made to them; which would have been natural, as to the mother of all the churches. This is eaſily accounted for on the ſuppoſition that all the remains of the Jewiſh chriſtians were the poor and deſpiſed unitarian Ebionites, reſiding chiefly beyond the ſea of Galilee, whoſe numbers likewiſe were inconſiderable; but hard to be ſuppoſed, if there were any churches of orthodox Jewiſh chriſtians, reſiding at Jeruſalem, or elſewhere.

5. If there was any conſiderable body of orthodox Jewiſh chriſtians, why do we never hear of any Hebrew goſpels beſides that of Matthew? If they held the doctrine of the orthodox gentile churches concerning the perſon of Chriſt, it is probable that

they would have had the ſame reſpect for the other goſpels, and the other books of the New Teſtament, and yet it is almoſt certain, that they made little uſe of them.

By way of apology for your additions to the ſcanty accounts of the ancients, concerning the conqueſt of Jeruſalem by Adrian, you ſay, p. 38, "The "eccleſiaſtical hiſtory of thoſe times is ſo very ge- "neral and imperfect, that whoever attempts to "make out a conſiſtent ſtory from any ancient "writers which are come down to us, will find "himſelf under the neceſſity of helping out their "broken accounts by his own conjectures."

But certainly, Sir, the *contradicting* of an ancient writer, is not the way to *help out* his account of things. Now Euſebius, the oldeſt writer who mentions the fact, ſays, that after the taking of the city by Adrian, the whole nation of the Jews (παν εθνος, which excludes all diſtinction with reſpect to *religion*) were forbidden even to ſee the deſolation of their metropolis at a diſtance *. To *help out this broken account*, becauſe it does not contain all that you wiſh it to do (though I ſee nothing *broken* in it) you ſay that the Jews were allowed to remain in the place, and enjoy the privileges of the Ælian colony, on

* Και τε της αποικιας αυτας αυτοις την αξιαν εδοκιμασθη δοκει, το παν εθνος εξ εκεινου και της περι τα Ιεροσολυμα γης παμπαν εποιουν ειργεσθαι, νομω δογματι και διαλαξεσιν Αδριανου ως αν μηδ' εξ αποσης θεωρειν το πολιωον εδαφος εγκελευσαμενου. Hiſt. Lib. iv. cap. 6.

condition

condition of their becoming christians. To help out this addition, I would farther add, that another of the terms of the capitulation was, that they should from that time speak Greek, as without this, they could have derived no benefit from the offices of a Greek church.

Sulpicius says, that by this severity to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Adrian thought to destroy the christian faith. But to this you oppose the authority of Orosius (calling it, however, p. 43, but a *feather* in the scale) that when the Jews were excluded, the christians were allowed to remain. If your liberty of *helping out a broken story* may be exercised here, I should say, that in the idea even of this writer, the *Greek* christians might remain, but the *Jewish* not. If any regard is to be paid to Eusebius, the oldest historian, or to Sulpicius, who is much more circumstantial than Orosius, and on that account better entitled to credit, no Jews, christians or others, were allowed to remain in the place.

To make your account the more probable, you say, p. 44, "It is a notorious fact that Adrian was "not unfavourable to the christians, and that the "church in his reign obtained a respite from per-"secution." But how far did this favour to christians extend? You say, "the fury of their perse-"cutors was restrained by the imperial rescripts to "the provincial governors, who were directed not "to proceed against the christians, except by way of "regular trial, upon the allegation of some certain

"crime, and when nothing more was alleged than "the bare name of christianity, to punish the in-"former as a sycophant." That is, as the history of those times enables us to interpret it, they were not to be punished as christians till they were proved to be so, which was the case in the reign of Trajan; but does not amount to a toleration of the Jews at Jerusalem, on condition of their embracing christianity.

Your favourite Mosheim says (Hist. vol. i. p. 128) that what was done by Adrian (in whose reign the persecution of christians had raged with peculiar violence) was a solemn renewal of the law of Trajan. In the reign of Antoninus Pius, but not before, it was ordered that a man being proved to be a christian, should not be deemed sufficient for his condemnation, unless he was also proved to have been guilty of some crime against the state. There is, therefore, little reason to think that Adrian was so well disposed towards christianity, as to permit the rebellious Jews to remain in Jerusalem on condition of their embracing it.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Of the Testimony of Epiphanius to the Existence of a Church of Orthodox Jewish Christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian.

REV. SIR,

AFTER the preliminary observations contained in the preceding letter, I shall now consider the testimony that you have produced from Epiphanius.

You say. p. 46, that "the *fact* (viz. of the return of the Jews from Pella to Jerusalem, after the wars of Adrian) of which Dr. Priestley has done me "the honour to make me the inventor, is asserted "by Epiphanius.—The confidence," you add, "with which he mentions this, as a fact forged "by me, is only one instance, out of a great "number, of his own shameless intrepidity in "assertion."

If, Sir, you wish to reclaim a person, you should never deprive him of *all* character, but should leave him a *little*, a small root, from which *more* may afterwards spring. Having now no character to lose, being capable of asserting any thing,

true or falſe, that is likely to anſwer my purpoſe, I will, "with the moſt ſhameleſs intrepidity," aſſert, that Epiphanius mentions no ſuch *fact* as you ſo very confidently ſuppoſe him to have done. After carefully examining the paſſage which you have produced, I do maintain, that in it he makes no mention whatever of any return of chriſtian Jews from Pella, beſides that which took place after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by Titus, and not at all of any return after the deſtruction by Adrian. This is moſt evident, from attending to the very next ſentence which follows the words that you have quoted. The whole paſſage is as follows:

After mentioning Aquila, as appointed by Adrian, the inſpector of his works at Ælia, Epiphanius gives the following hiſtory of him.— "Aquila, living at Jeruſalem, and ſeeing the dif- "ciples of the diſciples of the apoſtles flouriſhing "in the faith, and working great miracles, eſpe- "cially of healing (For they had returned from "the city of Pella to Jeruſalem, and taught there. "For when the city was about to be taken by the "Romans, all the diſciples had been forwarned "by an angel to leave the city, which was devot- "ed to deſtruction. Theſe, leaving it, went and "dwelt in the above-mentioned Pella, beyond "Jordan, one of thoſe that were called Decapolis; "but returning after the deſolation of Jeruſalem, "as I have ſaid, worked miracles). Aquila, there- "fore, being convinced, became a chriſtian, and

"after

"after ſome time requeſting the ſeal of chriſtiani-
"ty [viz. baptiſm] obtained it *."

What can be more evident, than that the return of the Jewiſh chriſtians from Pella, mentioned in this paſſage by Epiphanius, is that return which followed the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by Titus? For he ſpeaks of their having left that city, antecedent to *this return* to it, in conſequence of being warned by an angel ſo to do, which was ſaid to be the caſe before the deſtruction by Titus, but never before that by Adrian; and it was by the diſciples of thoſe who then returned, that Aquila was converted to chriſtianity, which was probably a conſiderable time before the deſtruction of the Jews by Adrian.

After the imperfect quotation of the paſſage of which I have given the entire tranſlation, you have

* Ο τοινυν Ακυλας, διαγων εν τη Ιερουσαλημ, και ορων τους μαθητας των μαθητων αποστολων ανθρωπας τη πιστει, και σημεια μεγαλα εργαζομενους, ιασεων και αλλων θαυμαστων. ησαν γαρ υποστρεψαντες απο Πελλης της πολεως εις Ιερουσαλημ, και διδασκοντες, ηνικα γαρ ημελλεν η πολις αλισκεσθαι υπο των Ρωμαιων, προεχρηματισθησαν υπο αγγελου, παντες οι μαθηται μελλησαι απο της πολεως μελλουσης αρδην απολλυσθαι: οι τινες, και μελανασαι γενομενοι, ωκησαν εν Πελλη τη προγεγραμμενη πολει, περαν του Ιορδανου, ητις εκ δεκαπολεως λεγεται ειναι. μετα δε την εφημωσιν Ιερουσαλημ υποστρεψαντες, ως εφην, σημεια μεγαλα επεδειξαν. Ο ουν Ακυλας κατανυγεις την διανοιαν, τω χριστιανισμω επιστευσεν. αιτησας δε μετα χρονον την εν χριστω σφραγιδα, εκομισατο. De menſuris et ponderibus, Opera, vol. 2. p. 171.

the assurance to add, p. 47, "Whether this return "of the christians of Jerusalem from Pella, took "place in the interval between the end of Titus's "war and the commencement of Adrian's, or af-"ter the end of Adrian's, is a matter of no im-"portance. It is sufficient for my purpose that "these returned christians were residing at Jerusa-"lem, or more properly at Ælia, at the same "time that Aquila was residing there, as overseer "of the emperor's works. Let not the public be "abused by any cavils which ignorance or fraud "may raise about the chronology of the return."

But certainly it must be of consequence to know, whether Aquila was residing at Jerusalem after the destruction of that city by Adrian; and this is more than Epiphanius says, or is at all probable in itself. For the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Adrian, in which Aquila was employed by him, was undertaken in the 13th year of his reign, a year before the revolt of the Jews; and it was not till the 18th of Adrian, that they were entirely subdued.

According to Epiphanius, Aquila, after his conversion to christianity by the descendants of the Jewish christians, who were returned from Pella (retaining his former practices) was excommunicated by them. After this he became a Jew, and applying himself to the study of the scriptures, made a translation of them into Greek. This

This tranſlation Cave ſuppoſes to have been made A. D. 128, or 129, the 11th or 12th of Adrian. His converſion to chriſtianity, therefore, was probably prior to the reign of Adrian; and yet that is the only circumſtance that proves any intercourſe he ever had with Jewiſh chriſtians returned from Pella. On which ſide then is *the ignorance*, I ſay nothing of *the fraud*, of which you ſuſpect me in this buſineſs? You muſt, Sir, dig deeper than you have yet done, for the foundation of this favourite church.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

Of the Evidence from Jerom in Favour of the Exiſtence of a Church of Orthodox Jewiſh Chriſtians at Jeruſalem after the Time of Adrian.

REV. SIR,

I COME now to the two paſſages which you have quoted from Jerom. That on which you lay the greateſt ſtreſs you introduce in the following manner. "But I give him Origen," p. 48. "I will reſt the credit of my ſeventh poſi-
"tion upon the mention which occurs in Jerom's
"Commentary upon Iſaiah, of *Hebrews believing*
"*in Chriſt*, as diſtinct from the *Nazarenes*. Je-

"rom

"rom relates two different expositions of the pro-
"phecy concerning Zabulon and Naphtali, deliver-
"ed in the beginning of the 9th chapter of Isaiah,
"of which expositions he ascribes the one to the
"*Hebrews believing in Christ*, the other to the
"*Nazarenes*. The character given of these He-
"brews, that they *believed in Christ*, without any
"thing to distinguish their belief from the com-
"mon belief of the church, without any note of
"its error or imperfection, is a plain character of
"complete orthodoxy."

It is somewhat remarkable, that having before maintained, that those whom Jerom called *Nazarenes*, in his epistle to Austin, were *orthodox christians*, you should now allow that, by the same term, he here means *heretics*; and that the phrase, *believing in Christ*, should now be a character of *complete orthodoxy*, when in that epistle it is predicated of the heretical Ebionites. What clue can we have to any man's meaning, if he be supposed to use terms in such different, and even opposite senses? When neither himself, nor any other writer, ever says that there *were* two such very different kinds of Nazarenes, what right can you have to assert that there were?

The passage in Jerom on which, though you lay so much stress, you do not quote, is as follows. In his interpretation of Isaiah ix. 14. (cited in Matt. iv. 6.) he says, "Galilee of "the

" the Gentiles Aquila translates ἔθνων of the Gen-
" tiles, and Symmachus *the boundaries* of the Gen-
" tiles. By ἔθνων we understand heaps of sand on
" sea coasts, or shores. The Hebrews believing in
" Christ, interpret the passage in this manner. At
" first these two tribes, Zabulon and Naphtali,
" were taken by the Assyrians, and carried into
" their enemies country, and Galilee was destroyed;
" which the prophet now says was relieved, because
" he bore the sins of the people. But afterwards
" not only the two tribes, but the rest that dwelled
" beyond Jordan, in Samaria, were carried cap-
" tive. And this they say the scripture now de-
" clares, that the country whose people were first
" carried captive, and began to serve the Babylo-
" nians, and which was first involved in the dark-
" ness of error, was the first to see the light of
" Christ preaching to them, and from it the gospel
" was preached to all other nations. The Naza-
" renes, *whose opinion I have given above*, thus en-
" deavour to explain the passage. Christ coming,
" and his preaching shining forth, in the first place
" the country of Zabulon and Naphtalim, being
" delivered from the error of the scribes and phari-
" sees, shook from their necks the heavy yoke of
" Jewish traditions; but afterwards, by the preach-
" ing of the apostle Paul, who was the last of the
" apostles, the preaching was increased, or multi-
" plied, and the gospel of Christ shone to the ut-
" most boundaries of the Gentiles, and of the ocean.
" Then all the world, which before walked, or sat,
" in darkness, and was held in the chains of
" idolatry

"idolatry and death, saw the clear light of the "gospel*."

Before you can show that this passage, on which you lay so much stress, is at all to your purpose, you must prove the three following things. First, that *the Hebrews believing in Christ* were different from the *Nazarenes*. Secondly, that the former

* Pro *Galilea Gentium* Aquila θινας gentium, Symmachus, terminos gentium interpretati sunt: θινας, autem tumulos intelligimus arenarum, qui vel in littoribus vel in ripis sunt Hebræi credentes in Christum hunc locum ita edisserunt, Primo tempore hæ duæ tribus Zabulon et Nephtalim ab Assyriis captæ sunt et ductæ in hostilem terram, & Galilæa deserta est, quam nunc propheta dicit alleviatam esse, eo quod peccata populi sustineret. Postea autem non solum duæ tribus, sed et reliquæ quæ habitabant trans Jordanem in Samaria, ductæ sunt in captivitatem. Et hoc, inquiunt scriptura nunc dicit, quod regii cujus populus primus ductus est in captivitatem & Babiloniis servire cœpit, et quæ prius in tenebris versabatur erroris, ipse primum lucem prædicantis viderit Christi, et ex ea in universas gentes sit evangelium seminatum. Nazaræi, quorum opinionem supra posui, hunc locum ita explanare conantur. Adveniente Christo, et prædicatione illius coruscante, prima terra Zabulon & terra Nephtalim scribarum et pharisæorum est erroribus liberata, et gravissimum traditionum Judaicarum jugum excussit de cervicibus suis. Postea autem per evangelium apostoli Pauli, qui novissimus apostorum omnium fuit, ingravata est, i. e. multiplicata prædicatio, & in terminos gentium & viam universi maris Christi evangelium splenduit. Denique omnis orbis, qui ante ambulabat vel sedebat in tenebris, & idolatriæ ac mortis vinculis tenebatur, clarum evangelicum lumen aspexit. Opera, vol. 4. p. 33.

were

were completely orthodox; and thirdly, that those orthodox Jewish christians resided at Jerusalem. And it appears to me that not one of these suppositions is at all probable.

That by *Nazarenes* Jerom did not intend any other than the *Hebrews believing in Christ*, but only meant to vary his mode of expression, is probable from this consideration; that, after giving a translation of the passage by Aquila and Symmachus, both Ebionites, he speaks of the interpretation of the prophecy by the Hebrew christians in general, and then says, the Nazarenes, *whose opinion he had given above*, explained, or illustrated it, in the manner that has been represented. The opinion to which he referred, as *given above*, was, therefore, probably, that of *the Hebrews believing in Christ*. And the explanations of the passage are not at all *different* from one another, but the latter a farther illustration of the former; the one being an interpretation of the prophecy, and the latter a more particular application of it to the time of Christ, and the gospel.

This passage, therefore, which you have quoted as decisively in your favour, instead of proving that the *Hebrews believing in Christ* were different from the *Nazarenes*, furnishes an additional argument that, in the idea of Jerom, they were the very same people; if it does not also prove that their opinions were the same with those of Aquila and Symmachus, or of the Ebionites.

You

You may, indeed, ſay that the opinion of the Nazarenes to which Jerom refers, as *given above*, was that account of the Nazarenes which is found in his commentary on the preceding chapter, viz. "their ſo receiving Chriſt as not to abandon the old "law." But the remoteneſs of the paſſage, and its having no relation to the ſubject of which he is treating in his commentary on the ninth chapter, make it improbable.

2. Admitting that Jerom alluded to ſome difference between the *Hebrews believing in Chriſt* and *the Nazarenes*, it is far from following, that the former were *completely orthodox*, and the latter not. For the phraſe *believing in Chriſt* is applied both by Origen and Jerom to the heretical Jewiſh chriſtians. His not expreſsly ſaying that they were *heretics* in this place, on which you lay ſo much ſtreſs, can never prove that they were *completely orthodox*; ſince their hereſy had nothing to do with the ſubject of which Jerom is here treating.

All the difference between theſe two deſcriptions of Jewiſh chriſtians that Jerom *can* be ſuppoſed to allude to, is ſuch a one as Origen made of two ſorts of Ebionites, viz. one who believed the miraculous conception, and the other who diſbelieved it; or that of Juſtin, viz. of thoſe who would hold communion with the gentile chriſtians, and thoſe who would not.

"It

"It must strike the learned reader," you say, "p. 53, "that the Nazarenes mentioned by St. "Jerom, in the passage to which I now refer, of "his annotations on Isaiah, must have been a dif-"ferent people from those mentioned by him with "such contempt in his epistle to St. Austin, and "described by Epiphanius. The Nazarenes here "mentioned by St. Jerom, held the Scribes and "Pharisees in detestation, their traditions in con-"tempt, and the apostle St. Paul in high venera-"tion." Now I see no intimation in this passage, of there being any other kinds of Nazarenes, or Jewish christians, besides such as Paul found at Jerusalem in his last journey thither, the more intelligent of them being his friends, and rejoicing in the success of his preaching. But even his greatest enemies must have admitted, that the knowledge of christianity was extended by his means, which is all that Jerom says of the Nazarenes in this place. As to the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, we read of no Jewish christians who did not hold them in contempt.

3. Allowing both that the *Hebrews believing in Christ* and the *Nazarenes* were different people, and that the former were completely orthodox, it will not follow that there was a church of them at Jerusalem, which is the thing that you contend for.

"On these foundations," however, you say, p. 51, "which a stronger arm than Dr. Priestley's shall not "be able to tear up, stands the church of orthodox

"Jewiſh chriſtians at Jeruſalem, to which the aſ-
"ſertors of the catholic faith will not ſcruple to
"appeal, in proof of the antiquity of their doctrine,
"whatever offence the very mention of the ortho-
"dox church at Jeruſalem may give to the enraged
"Hereſiarch."

Alas! theſe *new foundations*, being, like the former, built upon the ſand, are alſo completely ſwept away. I will add, that he muſt be a bolder man than he that rebuilt Jericho, who ſhall attempt to reſtore them.

But this is not the only paſſage in Jerom to which you appeal. You alſo ſay, p. 58, that "he men-
"tions Nazarenes who held the doctrine of our
"Lord's divinity. For, by an expoſition of Iſaiah,
"viii. 13, 14. which St. Jerom aſcribes to them, it
"appears that they acknowledged in Chriſt the
"יהוה צבאות [the Lord of Hoſts] of the Old Teſ-
"tament." For any thing like a ſhadow of a proof of this moſt extraordinary aſſertion, I a long time looked in vain, and thought the reference muſt have been miſprinted; but at length, conſidering what kind of a reaſoner I had to do with, I believe I diſcovered your real ideas on the ſubject.

The prophet ſays (ch. viii. 13, 14.) *Sanctify the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; and he ſhall be for a ſanctuary; but for a ſtone of ſtumbling, and for a rock of offence,*

to

to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In his commentary on this passage, Jerom says, "the Nazarenes (who so received Christ, as not to "abandon the observance of the old law) interpret "these two houses of Sammai and Hillel, from which "arose the scribes and pharisees, &c. and that these "were the *two houses* which did not receive the "Saviour, who was to them for a destruction and "an offence *."

Jerom, however, does not make the inference that you do, viz. that because the Nazarenes thought that this prophecy referred to the times of Christ, and to his rejection by the scribes and pharisees, they believed Christ to be the *Lord of Hosts*. They only call him *the Saviour*, meaning, probably a person speaking and acting by authority from

* Duas domus Nazarei (qui ita Christum recipiunt ut observationes legis veteris non amittant) duas familias interpretantur Samai et Hillel, ex quibus orti sunt scribæ et pharisæi, quorum suscepit scholam Axibas, quem magistrum Aquilæ proseliti autumant, et post eum Meir; cui successit Johannen, filius Zacharæi, et post eum Eliezer, et per ordinem Delphon, et rursum Joseph Galilæus, et usque ad captivitatem Hierusalem Josue. Samai igitur et Hillel, non multo prius quam dominus nasceretur orti sunt in Judæa, quorum prior *dissipator* interpretatur, sequens *prophanus*; eo quod per traditiones et Δευτερώσεις suas, legis præcepta dissipaverint atque maculaverint. Et has esse *duas domus*, quæ salvatorem non receperint, qui factus sit eis in ruinam et in scandalum. Opera, vol. 4. p. 32.

God, who was in reality rejected by those who rejected his messenger, though a *mere man*. As our Lord himself says, Luke x. 6. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* On this ground you might rank both the Nazarenes, and all the modern professed unitarians, with believers in the divinity of Christ. You might even make them believers in the divinity of the apostles, and that of all the preachers of the gospel. But having no better evidence of the orthodoxy of the Nazarenes, you were obliged to make the best of this, which will prove a great deal too much.

I wonder, however, that this mode of interpreting scripture does not stagger even yourself. I thought that the most orthodox of the present day had believed that the person characterised by the title of *the Lord of Hosts* had been not *the Son*, but *the Father*. If the *Lord*, i. e. *Jehovah, of Hosts*, which is no doubt synonymous to *Jehovah*, absolutely so called, be *the Son*, it will be difficult to find *the Father* any where in the Old Testament.

Thus I have considered all the evidence, positive or presumptive, that you have produced for the existence of a church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem after the time of Adrian. I have particularly considered your five *quotations* from ancient writers, and do not find that so much as one of them is at all to your purpose.

Thus

Thus again ends this church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem, planted by Mosheim, and destroyed by the too copious watering of the Archdeacon of St. Albans.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

Of the Miraculous Conception.

REV. SIR,

YOUR *Sermon on the Incarnation* ought to be considered as making part of our controversy; and indeed it might with more propriety have been entitled a Discourse against myself, as you have contrived to introduce into it reflections on every opinion that I have at any time advanced, that you could think would make me appear in an obnoxious light. But for this I am not sorry; because the more those opinions are kept in view, the sooner will the horror they at first inspire go off. In time mankind will be less offended at them, and may come to approve what they now dislike. As to mere *abuse*, in which light only those reflections can be considered as they appear in this Sermon, I

think my *time*, and even my *ink*, of too much value to be thrown away in anſwering it.

As to the *miraculous conception*, to which your Sermon chiefly relates, I do not pretend to make myſelf a party for or againſt it, having only endeavoured to ſupply materials for forming a right judgment in the caſe. But I cannot help obſerving that, inſtead of new *light*, you have thrown upon it a great maſs of additional *darkneſs*, and of a deeper ſhade than any thing that has been produced by the chriſtian Fathers, at leaſt till long after the council of Nice.

With reſpect to the *importance* of the doctrine you ſay, p. 7, that, " as an article of the chriſtian " faith, it is evidently the foundation of the whole " diſtinction between the character of Chriſt, in the " condition of a man, and that of any other pro- " phet. Had the conception of Jeſus been in the " natural way, had he been the fruit of Mary's " marriage with her huſband, his intercourſe with " the Deity could have been of no other kind than " the nature of any other man might have equally " admitted,——and how it ſhould differ (p. 9.) " otherwiſe than in the degree of frequency " and intimacy, it will not be eaſy to explain, unleſs " we adhere to the faith tranſmitted to us from the " primitive ages, and believe that the eternal word, " who was in the beginning with God, and was " God, ſo joined to himſelf the holy thing which " was formed in Mary's womb, that the two na-

"tures, from the commencement of the virgin's "conception, made one person——Jesus, accord-"ing to the primitive doctrine, was so united to "the ever living word, that the very existence of "the man consisted in this union."

"It was," you say, p. 11, "clearly the doctrine of "holy writ, and nothing else, which the Fathers as-"serted, in terms borrowed from the schools of phi-"losophy, when they affirmed, that the very prin-"ciple of personality and individual existence in "Mary's son, was union with the uncreated word. "A doctrine in which the miraculous conception "would have been implied, had the thing not been "recorded; since a man conceived in the ordinary "way would have derived the principles of his ex-"istence from the mere physical powers of genera-"tion. Union with the divine nature could not "have been the principle of an existence physically "derived from Adam; and that intimate union of "God and man in the Redeemer's person, which "the scriptures so clearly assert, had been a physical "impossibility."

You add, p. 13, "On the other hand, it were "not difficult to shew, that the miraculous concep-"tion, once admitted, naturally brings up after it "the great doctrines of the atonement, and the in-"carnation."

To these uncouth assertions, expressed in language utterly unintelligible, and equally unwarranted

by ſcripture, or reaſon, I ſhall make no particular reply. *He that can receive them, let him receive them.* I ſhall only obſerve, in general, that if I ſhould profeſs myſelf an opponent of the doctrine of the miraculous conception, I could not wiſh for a fuller refutation of it, than your being able to prove that theſe very abſurd doctrines do, as you ſay, neceſſarily depend upon it. I ſhall add, that if Chriſt had ſo extraordinary a communication with God, in conſequence of his having no father, what muſt have been the caſe with Adam, who had neither father nor mother?

When you ſhall ſee what I have advanced on this ſubject, in the fourth volume of my *Hiſtory of early Opinions concerning Chriſt*, you will be better qualified to write about it than you were at the time of compoſing this Sermon. This *Hiſtory* you ironically, p. 12, call my GREAT WORK, printing it twice in capitals. This work, which is now before the public, and may be in your hands, you are welcome to treat ironically, or ſeriouſly, as you pleaſe. But you will lead many of your readers to conclude, that I had myſelf called it a *great work*, whereas I do not recollect that I have any where called it more than a *large work*, which does not imply ſo much vanity as, in p. 86, you aſcribe to me. If that work ſhould ſtand its ground againſt the fierce attacks of the Archdeacon of St. Albans, the learned Profeſſor of Arabic at Oxford, the more learned Mr. Howes of Norwich, and the other learned orthodox

thodox divines, at home and abroad, whoſe animadverſions it openly challenges, it may deſerve a more honourable epithet than I have yet given it. At preſent it is only a candidate for the approbation of thoſe who are proper judges of its merit.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

Miſcellaneous Articles.

REV. SIR,

WERE I diſpoſed to indulge myſelf in noticing all the ſtrange poſitions, and inconcluſive reaſonings, with which your *Remarks* abound, I ſhould make a much larger work than I fear my readers would care to *look through*. Having, therefore, abundantly refuted every thing on which you yourſelf pretend to lay the moſt ſtreſs, I ſhall be very ſhort in my remarks on other things, to which, however, you ſtrongly ſolicit my attention.

I.

As to my construction of *the passage in Athanasius*, we are sufficiently come to an issue. I am fully satisfied with what I have advanced in support of it, and have nothing to add; and, contemptuously as you treat it, p. 32, I should not feel myself disposed to distrust it on that account, even if I had not the concurrence of such names as Beausobre and Dr. Lardner in my favour. I do not know that you can produce the name of any writer whatever in favour of your interpretation.

II.

With respect to *the passages from Chrysostom*, you will find in my *larger work* (if you should condescend to look into such a quantity of *unfinished literature*) that your construction of his meaning is contradicted by himself. You yourself, however, acknowledge all that I want, when you say, p. 32, "the apostles first taught what was easiest to be "learned, and went on to higher points, as the "minds of their catechumens became able to bear "them." For, in reality, it makes no difference from whatever *motive* it was that the apostles did not chuse to teach the doctrine of Christ's divinity, or of the trinity. If christians were not *taught* those doctrines, they could not *know* them, and consequently they must have been unitarians, till they were instructed in them; and this, as all the Fathers say, was not till the publication of the gospel of John.

The

The learned and judicious Mr. Basnage, though a trinitarian, very frankly acknowledges, that Christ found the Jews in utter ignorance of the divinity of their Messiah, that his object was, "to accustom "them insensibly to a mystery so much above their "reason, and foreseeing that the church would revolt "against it." Chrysostom, he says, has succeeded in maintaining this. Hist. des Juifs. L. v. cap. ix. s. 3.

III.

You are pleased to ridicule my *Logic*, p. 13, as confounding *being*, *substance*, and *substratum*, and you find me "unapprized of that great principle, "without which a logician will handle his tools but "aukwardly, that the genus cannot be predicated "of the specific differences." I cannot tell where you learned this curious logic, with which I acknowledge I am utterly unacquainted; and I imagine it is equally unknown to common sense. For, according to it, since *men* are divided into *Whites* and *Blacks*, &c. &c. and the Whites may be subdivided into those of Europe and Asia, &c. and the Blacks into the Negroes of Africa, and other distinct species in other parts of the world, it would follow, that it cannot with propriety be said of any particular Whites or Blacks, that they are *men*, and it would be still less proper to say that they are *animals* or *creatures*, and least of all that they are *beings*, that is, that they have any existence at all. However, it is unusually modest in you, to allow that even *great men* have fallen into the same error with

with myſelf, " in ſuppoſing that *being* is an univerſal " genus, under which all other genera rank as ſpe- " cies." I am content to claſs with theſe great men, greater, as you ſay, than myſelf.

IV.

I am particularly amuſed with your account of *the diſſenters* in this country, with whom it may be preſumed that I am better acquainted than you are. And yet, in contradiction to what I aſſerted, and to what I am confident every diſſenting miniſter, of any denomination whatever, will acknowledge to be true, you largely maintain, p. 63, that " Calviniſm is almoſt extinguiſhed among us." However, I the leſs wonder at your ignorance of *ancient ſects* when you ſo peremptorily decide with reſpect to *modern ones*, arguing on the moſt fallacious principles, and neglecting, or deſpiſing, the ſureſt and the moſt eaſily acceſſible ſources of information. I ſincerely wiſh, that the *rational Diſſenters* were more numerous than they are; but the ſmallneſs of their number, compared to that of the Calviniſtic diſſenters, is a clear proof of the truth of my general maxim, that great bodies do not ſoon change their opinions; and that maxim affords the ſtrongeſt preſumption that the body of chriſtians, having, according to the acknowledgement of all the Fathers, been at firſt unitarians, could not ſoon become trinitarians. Accordingly, there are the cleareſt indications that, in fact, they continued to be unitarians for ſeveral centuries.

V. You

V.

You have taken great, but unneceſſary pains, to prove that the places in which Mr. Lindſey and myſelf officiate, are properly *conventicles*, p. 72, becauſe we who preach in them are not authoriſed by law. It is a matter of little conſequence by what name they are called, ſince, even in the worſt and moſt obnoxious ſenſe of the term, as *places unauthoriſed by law*, the apoſtles generally preached in conventicles.

I ſhould think, however, that if, by any accident, an unauthoriſed diſſenting miniſter, like myſelf, ſhould preach in a *pariſh church*, it would not, on that account, become *a conventicle*, and require reconſecration. And if not, neither does the building in which I officiate, being licenſed according to law, and therefore *in itſelf* no conventicle, become one in conſequence of my preaching in it.

VI.

You have a whole chapter *on the general ſpirit of my controverſial writings*, in which you take much pains to exhibit me as a man whoſe deſigns are hoſtile to my country, and who has no pretenſion to the character of a *good chriſtian*, or a *good ſubject*. I rejoice that I am reproached on this account, as I am conſcious that it is unmerited, and ſhall only obſerve, that the ſame things, and on the very ſame grounds, were ſaid of Luther, and may be ſaid of any man who ſhall endeavour to reform any thing

that

that he finds eſtabliſhed in the country in which he is born. For it is impoſſible that any man ſhould wiſh for a new and better ſtate of things, without wiſhing for an alteration of the old and worſe ſtate; and if he may on this account be denominated an enemy to the country in which that old and worſt ſtate prevails, a phyſician muſt, on the ſame principle, be deemed the enemy of his patient, whoſe diſorders he wiſhes to cure, and eſpecially if, in order to it, he has recourſe to unpleaſing remedies.

At the ſame time that you profeſs the greateſt moderation, you cannot conceal your ſecret wiſhes for the interference of ſome *aid from a foreign quarter*. You ſay, indeed, p. 82, "Whatever Dr. Prieſtley "may affect to think of the intolerance of church-"men in general, or of the Archdeacon of St. "Alban's in particular, a churchman lives not in "the preſent age ſo weak, who would not, in po-"licy, if not in love, diſcourage, rather than pro-"mote any thing that might be called *a perſecution* "of the unitarian blaſphemy, in the perſon of "Dr. Prieſtley, or of any of his admirers. A "churchman lives not ſo weak, as not to know, "that perſecution is the hot-bed in which nonſenſe "and impiety have ever thrived." I wiſh, Sir, I could perſuade myſelf that this was true. For there certainly are ſome very weak churchmen, who, having leſs confidence in the force of *argument* than you have, may be alarmed too ſoon, and cry, *the church is in danger*; in which caſe you would

would yourſelf think the interference of *civil power* very proper.

Confiding, however, in the good ſenſe and moderation of my countrymen in general, though not in that of the clergy in particular, I ſhall perſiſt in uſing that liberty which the laws *ought* to give me. Unitarianiſm has flouriſhed very well, as you allow, in perſecution. Let the experiment be fairly made, and we ſhall ſee whether it will not flouriſh as well in that ſtate of perfect freedom, which the generous temper of the times gives us.

In a ſpirit very different from the general profeſſions quoted above, you cannot forbear to inſinuate, that my deſigns are truly alarming to the ſtate, and ſay, p. 82, "If Dr. Prieſtley ever ſhould attempt to execute the ſmalleſt part of what he would now be underſtood to threaten, it may then be expedient that the magiſtrate ſhould ſhew that he beareth not the ſword in vain."

You ſay, p. 83, "Let us truſt for the preſent, as we ſecurely may, to the trade of the good town of Birmingham, and to the wiſe connivance of the magiſtrate (who watches, no doubt, while he deems it politic to wink) to nip Dr. Prieſtley's goodly projects in the bud; which nothing would be ſo likely to ripen to a dangerous effect, as conſtraint exceſſively or unſeaſonably uſed.

"Thanks,

"Thanks, however, are due to him from all lovers "of their country, for the mischief which he wants "not the inclination to do, if he could find the "the means of doing it. In gratitude's estimation, "the will is ever to be taken for the deed." What is this but saying, that it would be wise and right to nip my projects even in the bud, if there was any prospect of my succeeding in them? And what could a Bonner or a Gardener say more? They would never have burned men alive, if it had not been to prevent what they thought to be *mischief*. Indeed, Sir, you do not know what spirit you are of.

But my projects are more than in the bud. I am at this very time actually executing all that I would be understood to threaten, or ever have threatened. I am endeavouring, by all the means in my power, to rouse the attention of thinking men in this country to the corrupt state of the religion that is established in it, and especially to convince them of the mischievous tendency of worshipping Christ as a God, when christianity disclaims all knowledge of any other God than one, and that *the God and Father of Christ*; being confident that when this is effected (and towards this considerable progress is visibly making every day, and it has met with no obstruction since the commencement of this controversy) not only will the present forms of trinitarian worship be abolished, but my countrymen will then thank me, and my friends,

for

for what we may have contributed towards ſo glorious a *revolution*. Till this be actually effected, you will naturally call our attempts *rebellious*. In the mean time, convince our governors, if you can, that the country will ſuffer in its wealth, population, power, &c. &c. by the people becoming unitarians.

Whatever you may inſinuate to the contrary, the real nature, and full extent of my views (which I carry on in obedience to a greater power than any in this world) might eaſily be ſeen by yourſelf, eſpecially in my late *Obſervations on freedom of inquiry in matters of religion*. There you might alſo have ſeen that the dreadful *engine*, by means of which I hope to accompliſh my dangerous deſigns, is *free diſcuſſion*, or *controverſy*,—an obſtinate controverſy, in which much *reſt*, but I hope no *lives*, will be loſt—much *ink*, but no *blood*, will be ſpilled; and in this I conſider the Archdeacon of St. Albans, Mr. White, Mr. Howes, and all my opponents, as my *coadjutors*; for without ſuch *concurrence*, no *controverſy* could be carried on. But "the weapons "of our warfare are not carnal."

To yourſelf, Sir, in particular, the world is indebted for whatever there may be of value in my large *Hiſtory of early opinions concerning Chriſt*. For without the link that you put into the chain of *cauſes and effects*, mechanically operating in my mind, the very idea of that work would not, I believe, have occurred to me. And I truſt that a fire

ſtill

ſtill more deſtructive to error and ſuperſtition, and conſequently to all the eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhments in the world, which are built upon and promote them, will be raiſed by the concurrence of your ſeaſonable pains in blowing up the flame of this controverſy; which will not, I truſt, be extinguiſhed, till its end be effectually anſwered.

Leſt you ſhould again relapſe into your criminal indolence of *eighteen months*, conſider that the great danger on which you, Sir, firſt ſounded the alarm (and Mr. White has ſounded the horn of battle ſtill louder) is now more threatening than ever. I hope that you and your brethren will never drop the ſpirit which breathed in your famous *Charge to the Archdeaconry of St. Albans*. Leſt you ſhould remit of your ardour, I ſhall here recite one paragraph from it.

"The reſtleſs ſpirit of ſcepticiſm will ſuggeſt difficulties in the ſyſtem, and create doubts about the particulars of the chriſtian doctrine: difficulties *muſt* be removed and doubts *muſt* be ſatisfied. But above all, the ſcruples *muſt* be compoſed which the refinements of a falſe philoſophy, patronized as they are in the preſent age by men no leſs amiable for the general purity of their manners, than diſtinguiſhed by their ſcientific attainments, will be too apt to raiſe in the minds of their weaker brethren. And this

" is

" is the ſervice to which they, whom the indulgence " of providence hath releaſed from the more labo- " rious office of the prieſthood, ſtand peculiarly en- " gaged. To them their more occupied brethren " have a right to look up in theſe emergencies, for " ſupport and ſuccour in the common cauſe. It is " for them to ſtand forth the champions of the com- " mon faith, and the advocates of their order. It " is for them to wipe off the aſperſion injuriouſly " caſt upon the ſons of the eſtabliſhment, as unin- " formed in the true grounds of the doctrine which " they teach, or inſincere in the belief of it. To " this duty they are indiſpenſably obliged by their " providential exemption from work of a harder " kind. It is the proper buſineſs of the ſtation " which is allotted them in Chriſt's houſhold. And " deep will be their ſhame, and inſupportable their " puniſhment, if, in the great day of reckoning, " it ſhould appear that they have received the " wages of a ſervice which hath never been per- " formed."

If, Sir, you read the above as often as you ought to do, you will never, in this very critical ſituation, when the enemy is at every gate, and ſcaling every rampart of your old and ruinous fortreſs, indulge yourſelf in your *ſoft couch of preferment*, but, together with your brethren, exert yourſelf *pro aris et focis*.

VII.

You ſay, p. 78, that, " as you conſider this con- " troverſy as reſembling a ſtate of war, in which no

"quarter is to be given, or accepted, you think "yourself at liberty to strike at your enemy without "remorse, in whatever quarter you may perceive an "opening." This fell language may well make me shudder at my situation, especially as, in my *large work*, at this very time probably in your cruel and remorseless hands, there must be many openings, and your vigilance in discovering them cannot be doubted. I trust, however, that though you may draw *blood* in many places, you will not be able to reach any vital part. Out of eighteen hundred references, I will gladly compound for eighteen being found defective, when, of no more than *five* in this performance of yours, not one proves to be to your purpose.

As you have apprized me of your resolution to strike at me without remorse, wherever you can find an opening, I may presume that the parts at which you have aimed your *remorseless blows*, are all that you thought vulnerable. But, Sir, you are not skilful in the art of tormenting, and, like the Indian warrior, I will teach you how you might wound me much more deeply.

Your chief wish is evidently to represent me as an enemy to the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of this country. Now had you been better *redde* in my writings (but they are happily too voluminous for you to *look through*) you might have found passages more to your purpose than any that you have selected. You have gone back as far as the year

1769, but you have overlooked the *Sermon* which I preached on resigning my pastoral office at Leeds, in 1773, one paragraph from which I shall insert for your use on another occasion.

"All who are interested in the support of these "antichristian establishments, which usurp an undue "authority over the consciences of men, and whose "wealth and power are advanced by them, are *at* "*this very time* in a state of general consternation, "both at home and abroad; seeing their principles "and maxims universally decried, and their unjust "claims assailed from a great variety of quarters, "so that *their kingdom is* now *full of darkness, and* "*they are gnawing their tongues for pain,* but *with-* "*out repenting of their deeds.*" Rev. xvi. 10, &c. &c. &c.

VIII.

As you talk, p. 15, of "culling the flowers of "my composition," I shall, in return, present you with some of your own. If they please so much when separate, what must be their beauty and fragrance when united?

"Insufficient antagonist, p. 1; confident igno- "rance, fiery resentment, violent invective, and "fierceness of wrath, p. 2; incompetency in the "subject, fraudulent trick, meant to be put upon "the public, but not on Dr. Horsley, p. 9; unfi- "nished erudition, shallow criticism, weak argu- "ment, unjustifiable art to cover the weakness, and "supply the want of argument, p. 13; the vain in-

"dignant struggle of a strong animal which feels "itself overcome, the mere growling of the tyger in "the toils, p. 14; a never to be forgotten attempt "upon a passage in St. John's first epistle, p. 18*; "a professor of Greek, unqualified to teach the "elements of that language, p. 34; a false and "fraudulent representation of an argument, p. 42; "precipitance in assertion, and talent in accommo-"dating his story to his opinion, p. 43; one in-"stance out of a great number, of his shameless in-"trepidity in assertion, p. 47; enraged heresiarch, "p. 51; prudence in not yet declaring his anti-"pathy to the civil as well as ecclesiastical consti-"tution of this country, p. 79; declaiming in his "conventicle to enlighten the minds, and excite the "zeal of the mechanics of the populous town of "Birmingham, p. 81; the excessive admiration in "which I hold myself, p. 86; unjust claim to the "titles of a good christian, or good subject, "p. 87, &c. &c. &c."

In connexion with this, let the reader now see what you say, p. 8. "If on any branch of chris-"tian duty my conscience be at perfect ease, the "precept *judge not* is that which I trust I have not

* Referring to a supposed attempt to impose upon my readers, by a false quotation of the common English version of the bible. A man really capable of *this*, could only be fit for Bedlam or Tyburn; and yet Dr. Horsley, in the very publication in which he advanced that charge, said my "virtues were great "and amiable;" as evident a contradiction as the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or *the trinity*. But as *these* have been believed, so may the other.

"transf-

"transgressed;" and p. 87, "From my youth up, "I have been averse to censorious judgment." Who then, Sir, can deny that an excess of meekness and moderation forms the leading feature in your character?

Having taken from me every moral quality, all knowledge of human nature, history, logic, and every thing requisite to qualify me for the controversy in which I have had the presumption to engage, together with the very elements of the Greek language, and even of Latin, I think myself happy that, having asserted your own right to all virtue, and all knowledge, you have not yet expressly denied my ability to write a little tolerably intelligible English, and I shall endeavour to make the best use that I can of it, before the fatal day shall come when I may be stripped of *this* also.

But, dropping this style, I must on one subject be a little serious with you. You say, p. 71, that I have charged you with *gross and wilful misrepresentation*. This I deny; and if I have inadvertently said any thing that implies as much, I shall publicly ask your pardon. I must, therefore, insist upon your making good this accusation. You repeatedly charge *me* with wilful misrepresentation, but I doubt not you really believe me to be that fraudulent and base character, which alone is capable of such conduct, and therefore you say no worse of me than you really believe. I do not think so ill of you, and therefore I do not use that language in

ſpeaking of you. I have, indeed, called you *a falſifier of hiſtory*, becauſe you have added, and (as you now acknowledge) *knew* that you added to the accounts of ancient hiſtorians. But then you really believed that the tranſactions paſſed as you related them, and that the particulars which you *added* had been *omitted* by the early writers. This is far ſhort of a *wilful lie*. After what I had written on this ſubject, in my eighteenth letter to you, I am ſurpriſed that you ſhould write as you do now. How different muſt be your feelings from mine.

The *concluſion* of your remarks, which is ſo little of a piece with the body of the work, that it puts me in mind of the introduction to Horace's art of Poetry*, is ſomething extraordinary, and indeed, ſhocking. After aſcribing to me the worſt deſigns, and the worſt paſſions, that can occupy the head or heart of man, and for once intimating the poſſibility of ſomething wrong lurking unperceived in your own boſom, ſpeaking of the awful ſolemnities of the laſt day, you expreſs a deſire that "whatever of "intemperate wrath, and carnal anger, has mixed "itſelf on either ſide with the zeal with which we "have purſued our fierce contention, may then be "forgiven to us both; a prayer," you ſay, "which "you breathe from the bottom of your ſoul," and

* Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere ſi velit, et varias inducere plumas,
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne;
Spectatum admiſſi riſum teneatis, amici?

to

to which you add, that if *I* have any part in the ſpirit of a chriſtian, I ſhall, on my bended knees, ſay, Amen.

Which of us has been actuated by the bad ſpirit which you deſcribe, our readers will infer, not from the declarations of either of us, but from our general temper, conduct, and manner of writing. If *I* be the man you deſcribe, I can have no hope of forgiveneſs at the awful period to which you refer, unleſs I repent and reform *now*. If, contrary to the ſolemn declaration of your perfect innocence, quoted above, you had, when you wrote this *concluſion*, a latent ſuſpicion that all had not been right on your ſide, you certainly, Sir, ought to have pauſed, have carefully reviſed what you had written, and have expunged what you could not approve. Boaſting of more chriſtianity than you will allow to me, you ought to teach me, by your example, what it is that our religion requires in theſe caſes, and not give any occaſion to an unauthoriſed teacher in a conventicle, to inſtruct an Archdeacon of the church of England in one of the firſt leſſons in the chriſtian ſchool.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Remarks on Mr. Howes's Ninth Number of Observations on Books ancient and modern.

IN Mr. Howes I have a much more respectable, and a somewhat more temperate antagonist than the Archdeacon of St. Albans; but I am sorry to find, that he has employed his ingenuity and learning (or, to use a favourite phrase of his his own, his *talent of disputation*) where neither of them can possibly avail him; the former in exculpating himself from the charge of representing me as an unbeliever, and the latter, in attempting to prove that the body of the Jews expected a God in their Messiah.

I do not rest my accusation on the construction of particular words and phrases, though that would abundantly justify it. Let any man of common sense read his Discourse, and then say, whether one great object of it was not to represent me as one of that class of persons, who having formerly been professed unbelievers in christianity, on finding that ground untenable, now only *pretend* to believe it, calling themselves *rational christians*, when in reality they are no christians at all. He has no occasion to have recourse to his Dictionary for the meaning of the word *pretend*.

Does

Does any man ever content himself with saying of another, that he *pretends* to a particular character, if he really thinks that he *has* a just claim to it? I say of Mr. Gibbon, that he pretends to be a believer in christianity; but then I mean what, if I use that language at all, I ought to mean, viz. that he *only pretends* to believe it, while he is artfully endeavouring to sap the very foundations of it. The same is the natural inference from all that Mr. Howes had said with respect to me.

If Mr. Howes really thinks me to be a believer in christianity, as he now says, it would much better have become him, ingenuously to acknowledge his fault, and to ask pardon for it. At present his apology only aggravates his offence. However, it affects himself only, and not me. We have one common master and judge, who knows both what he really intended by his account of me, and what I am; and by his sentence, and not by that of Mr. Howes, I shall stand or fall.

As to Mr. Howes's attempt, in this publication, to prove that the body of the Jewish nation really believed in the pre-existence and divinity of their Messiah, it must appear perfectly futile to any person who shall read what they will find, on that subject in my *History of early opinions concerning Christ*. He will there find that even the christian Fathers, eager as they were to press the *Jewish scriptures*

scriptures into the service of the doctrine of the trinity, did not pretend to have the body of the *Jewish nation* on their side. And would not they have been as glad as Mr. Howes now appears to be, to have found that belief among them? What some particular Jewish cabbalists (whose writings are remarkable for their ænigmatical obscurity) may have said, in a later period, is nothing to the purpose. To prove the easy reception of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ in the primitive times, Mr. Howes must find the doctrine of the divinity of the Messiah to have been the general belief of the Jewish nation in the age of the apostles. The opinion of such a Platonist as Philo, if we could be sure of it, can never pass for that of the Jewish nation in general, who certainly were not Platonists. Josephus is at least as good an authority as Philo; but is it probable that the Jewish nation, or the Pharisees in general, were believers in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, though this writer says they were? Josephus himself, and a few others, might believe that doctrine; and, from a natural bias to add to the respectability of our own party, he might give that representation of the faith of his sect in general. But Philo does not say that the Jews in general interpreted the scriptures as he did.

In my History Mr. Howes will find the most express testimony, that the Jews, in every age, from our Saviour's time to the present, were believers in the simple humanity of their Messiah.

The

The learned of that nation have always laughed at the pretence of orthodox christians to prove that their ancestors ever believed any thing else. Let Mr. Howes get acquainted with any learned Jews in this country, and they will give him the satisfaction they have given me on this subject. And is it not more likely that they should know the real sentiments of their countrymen, and of their own writers, with which they are continually conversant, than we can pretend to be? They give me the strongest assurances that the belief of their Messiah being a God, or that he pre-existed, neither is now, nor ever was, the faith of any of their countrymen. On the contrary, they hold these doctrines in the greatest abhorrence. Since this was indisputably the case, both in the time of the christian Fathers and at present, let Mr. Howes shew in which of the middle ages that doctrine was first introduced, how far it spread, and when it was deserted by them. Let him first answer what the learned Basnage, who was a trinitarian, has written on the subject, and then I will consider his arguments.

I am indeed astonished that neither Dr. Horsley, nor Mr. Howes, should so much as mention the name of *Basnage* in treating of this subject, which he has so learnedly, and so ably discussed, and who has so particularly considered what *Cudworth*, *Allix*, and *Bull* had advanced upon it. The character of Mr. Basnage, in Moreri's Dictionary

tionary, by Le Clerc, is as follows: "Monsieur "Basnage etoit vrai jusques dans les plus petites "choses. Sa candeur, sa franchise, sa bonne foi, "ne paroissent pas moins dans ses ouvrages, que "la profondeur de son erudition." What will foreigners say of Englishmen still retailing the stale arguments of the three writers above mentioned, without any notice of what has been replied to them by such a man as this? Notwithstanding the acknowledged excellence of his character, there will be nothing extraordinary in Dr. Horsley's representing him as a *wilful liar*. If any *character* could have been a security against such gross insult, it would have been that of Origen.

I am not much acquainted with the Jewish cabalists, except through the medium of Basnage and others, and therefore will not answer for the meaning of the writer Mr. Howes quotes, though it is of no signification what his meaning was; but of Philo I have some knowledge; and his meaning, I am confident, Mr. Howes has most grossly mistaken. Referring to that passage in Philo, which will be found in my History, vol. 2. p. 8, he says, p. 46, that "the chief, or most ancient "logos (as Philo expresses himself) is likewise "sometimes mentioned by him as being actually "*resident* in the high priest of the Jews, and even as "being the *very same* person with the high priest, "as if they were blended into a compound indi-"vidual; in consequence of which the high

" priest is there spoken of, and declared to be no " longer *a man*,——and of this divine logos he " says also, that he dwells in God. He goes on " to describe this divine logos, thus united to the " high priest, as having had God for his father, " and as being anointed with oil at his genera- " tion, or first government. Since then, p. 49, " Philo here ranked the high priest as being the " the same with the divine logos, and in another " place calls the divine logos a high priest, and " conceives them capable of forming a compound " individual, it is plain that the popular theology " had no objection to a similar compound, form- " ed out of the divine logos and a human Mes- " siah, descended from David; which union they " would naturally signify under the idea of the " latter being *anointed Christ*, who would conse- " quently be then no longer considered as *mere* " *man*."

Now, nothing can be more evident, even to a no very sagacious reader, than that Philo, in this passage, is merely indulging himself in one of his extravagant allegorical interpretations of scripture; supposing that what Moses says concerning the *high priest* was not to be understood of any *man*, but of the *Platonic divine logos*. This writer abounds in such ridiculous interpretations of scripture, and in them he was too readily followed by the christian Fathers. But Mr. Howes's interpretation of Philo is more extraordinary than Philo's interpretation

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of Moses. Besides, can this same divine logos have a proper *hypostatical union* with the Jewish high priest (probably every Jewish high priest) and with Jesus the son of Mary? What a strange system will this make?

Mr. Howes's construction of the passage, which he has quoted from Tertullian, p. 13, is no less wide of his purpose. But I shall not enlarge upon this topic till I see how Mr. Howes will acquit himself with respect to what he has engaged to do.

If any man can read the evidence that I have produced in my History, in favour of unitarianism having been the original faith of the christian church, the acknowledgments of the orthodox fathers, that this doctrine was so prevalent among both the Jews and gentiles, that it required the greatest caution in the apostles to teach them any more sublime doctrine, that the doctrines of the divinity and pre-existence of Christ were not taught with clearness and effect, except by John at the time of the publication of his Gospel, after that of the three others; that the common people, who were unitarians, were extremely shocked at the first proposal of the doctrine of the trinity in a later period; though, after this, the trinitarians expressed great contempt and dislike of the unitarian doctrine*, &c. &c. &c. and yet maintain that there

* That the unitarians were *at first* considered as *no heretics*, and *afterwards* as heretics, Mr. Howes represents, p. viii. as "an

were no proper unitarians in the apoſtolic age, and that which immediately followed it, I ſhall think him capable of undertaking to prove that this country was not inhabited by Britons before the arrival of the Romans; but that the Romans themſelves were the Aborigines of the country.

We are promiſed, however, abundant evidence of this ſingular poſition; and as Mr. Howes maintains, that thoſe whom I have called *unitarians* in that age differed from the orthodox in nothing more than in ſuppoſing that the union of the divine and human nature in Chriſt commenced ſo late as his baptiſm, and not ſo early as at his conception, I take it for granted that we ſhall find this mighty difference of opinion diſtinctly marked by many of the ancient writers, and reaſons given why this difference with reſpect to a *date* only, was conſidered as of ſo much conſequence. For that the difference was *thought* to be conſiderable, and eſpecially that the orthodox doctrine was thought to be much more *difficult* and *ſublime* than the other, is too evident to be denied. Now I ſhould think that it was quite as difficult to conceive of this hypoſtatical union taking place in a man full grown, as in an embrio in the womb. But Mr. Howes will certainly find *ſomething* to ſay in ſup-

"an inconſiſtency above his comprehenſion." How he can imagine this is above my comprehenſion. But we ſhall, probably, have ſufficient opportunity of explaining ourſelves.

port

port of ſo ſingular and favourite an hypotheſis, as that which he has adopted; and I am willing to wait his time.

In the mean time it is a particular ſatisfaction to me that this diſcuſſion is at length undertaken by Mr. Howes, who is unqueſtionably a ſcholar, and who is at the ſame time ſo expeditious in his motions; as we ſhall now ſee all that *can* be produced againſt my argument, and the learned will not long be in ſuſpenſe with reſpect to it. And then I hope it will appear that Mr. Howes is greatly miſtaken in his aſſertion, that no good ever aroſe from controverſy. But if that was his ſerious opinion, how can he juſtify himſelf in engaging in *this* controverſy, in which he is entirely a volunteer, and how comes it that every thing that he has written is controverſial? Both his *Obſervations on Books*, and his *Sermon*, are altogether ſuch. Much as I have written in controverſy, from the fulleſt conviction of the utility of it (which at leaſt juſtifies me to myſelf) the far greater part of my publications are of a different nature.

THE END.